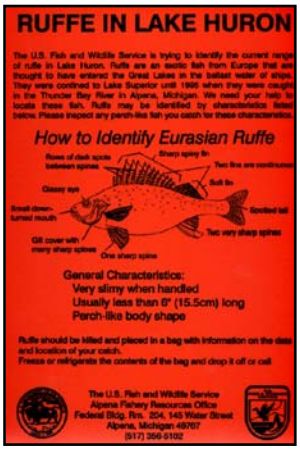
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Alpena FRO Accomplishment Report

Aquatic Species Conservation and Management

Alpena FRO Spreads the Word during Michigan's Aquatic Nuisance Species Week



Fishery Biologist Anjanette Bowen of the Alpena Fishery Resources Office (FRO) participated in Michigan's Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Week by educating anglers along Michigan waters of Lake Huron. Michigan Governor Granholm declared May 31 to June 7 ANS Week on May 29. There are over 170 aquatic nuisance species found in waters of the Great Lakes. Bowen contacted over 60 bait and license dealers, parks, and city chamber of commerce along U.S. waters of Lake Huron from Cheboygan to Bay City, Michigan during the week. Over 11,000 aquatic nuisance species Watch tackle box cards, ANS pamphlets, and posters were distributed to educate the public about unwanted aquatic species and what they can do to prevent their introduction and spread. Some easy ways to help prevent the spread of nuisance species include 1) dumping unused bait in buckets on the land and not in the water, 2) inspecting and removing any plant material or mussels from you boat, canoe, or personal watercraft, and 3) not releasing aquarium fish or any wild fish from one body of water to another. The Service is committed to aquatic nuisance species education and prevention in the Great Lakes. Educating anglers about the existence, identification, and problems associated with aquatic nuisance species will help curb their spread throughout the Great Lakes and to inland waters. In efforts during the 2003 ANS Awareness week in Michigan over 11,000 anglers and recreational water users will have been educated about aquatic nuisance species found in the Great Lakes. The Service is committed to aquatic nuisance species education and prevention in the Great Lakes. Educating anglers about the existence, identification, and problems associated with aquatic nuisance species will help curb their spread throughout the Great Lakes and to inland waters. In efforts during the 2003 ANS Awareness week in Michigan over 11,000 anglers and recreational water users will have been educated about aquatic nuisance species found in the Great Lakes.

Anjanette Bowen

Sturgeon Research occurring at Purdy Fisheries highlighted in the Times Herald

Fishery Biologist James Boase traveled to Purdy Fisheries located in Point Edward, Ontario on 16 June 2003 to assist with lake sturgeon research. The natural deep-water reef located in the St Clair River between Port Huron, Michigan and Point Edward attracts spawning lake sturgeon each spring. During spring spawning runs lake sturgeon are captured by Purdy's commercial trap-nets as well as setlines deployed by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Fish

that are captured are brought back to the Purdy facility where they can be housed in two large raceways for up to two weeks. The Purdy facility along with the abundance of lake sturgeon in the spring makes that facility unique for lake sturgeon research throughout the Great Lakes. On 16 June biologists from Poland, Ohio State University, USGS Great Lakes Science Center, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR), and USFWS met at the Purdy facility to collect biological information from 122 lake sturgeon. Boase and biologist Ray Argyle from USGS Great Lake Science Center implanted 20 adult lake sturgeon with temperature/depth recorders. The temperature/depth research is a joint project with the Ashland FRO that was initiated last year when 20 lake sturgeon were implanted. Four lake sturgeon implanted in 2002 have been recaptured by the Purdy fishery. Temperature/depth recorders were successfully removed from all 4 fish. Professors Andrzej Ciereszko from the Polish Academy of Sciences, Olsztyn, Poland, and Konrad Dabrowski from The Ohio State University, and Graduate Research Assistant Julia Froschauer successfully collected eggs and sperm from 4 female and 4 male lake sturgeon. The focus of their research includes cryopreservation of eggs and sperm, and viability of lake sturgeon following delayed egg fertilization. Biologist Lloyd Mohr from OMNR collected biological information from the lake sturgeon as part of a project initiated in 1995. To date over four-thousand lake sturgeon have been sampled at the Purdy facility by OMNR researchers. Throughout the day reporter Deanna Weniger from the Port Huron Times Herald was interviewing researchers and photographing lake sturgeon, the article was published on 17 June 2003.

Boase invited the reporters to help get the word out about the importance of the spawning site located in the St. Clair River in Port Huron and the role the connecting waterways have in lake sturgeon rehabilitation. This event also provided an excellent opportunity for Boase to explain how the Alpena FRO is working with government agencies and private industries from both Canada and the US in efforts to rehabilitate lake sturgeon populations throughout the Great lakes. This event provided an excellent opportunity to explain to the public the Service's mission and efforts to restore native fish. Specifically, the interview focused on efforts to rehabilitate lake sturgeon populations in the Great Lakes and the role that the Fishery Resources Offices have in this endeavor. The benefits of native species restoration were clearly defined and explained. The interview was also an excellent outreach opportunity.

James C. Boase

Alpena FRO Assists With Annual ANS Surveillance in the Illinois Waterway

On June 9-13, Anjanette Bowen of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fishery Resources Office (FRO)in Alpena, Michigan assisted the La Crosse FRO with efforts to determine the extent of the range of the round goby and asian carp in the Illinois waterway. Both the round goby and asian carp are aquatic nuisance fish species(ANS) and are thought to compete with native fish for food and habitat. Round goby have entered the Illinois Waterway from Lake Michigan and is feared to spread into the Mississippi River. Asian carp escaped from fish farming in the southern drainage of the Mississippi River and is feared to

enter the Great Lakes. Both species are expected to cause considerable damage to native fish communities. The La Crosse FRO has initiated and coordinated the annual survey since 1995. Many state, federal, and community agencies cooperate on this project which involves angling, trapping, gillnetting, and trawling for round goby and asian carp along 100 miles of the Illinois Waterway. Alpena FRO has assisted with the annual survey since 1997. The Service works to monitor and combat the spread of aquatic nuisance species through inter and intra-agency coordination.

Anjanette K. Bowen

Aquatic Habitat Conservation and Management

Thunder Bay River Erosion Site Surveyed

Service Biologists Heather Enterline and Susan Wells, and Thunder Bay Power Manager Brad MacNeill surveyed a large erosion site on the Thunder Bay River June 6 and 9. Over 1500 feet long, this erosion site has high, steep, clay banks. This erosion site is considered to be the worst on the river, washing away several feet of property from riparian landowners each year. The survey consisted of a streambank profile at the erosion site and a cross-sectional survey of the river every 100 feet. MacNeill D R & Associates mapped the curvature of the river and took precise GPS Coordinates. The Services' Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program has funded the partial repair of the site. Thunder Bay Power is engineering the site, MacNeill D R & Associates donated survey information, LaFarge Corporation (Alpena) is donating stone, and private landowners are donating labor and funding. Construction is scheduled for late August/early September 2003. Elimination of this erosion site on the Thunder Bay River will enhance a coolwater fishery consisting of smallmouth bass, yellow perch, northern pike and a number of minnows and shiners. Protection of this erosion site will remove the potential for tons of clay to smother spawning beds, fill pools, and add to the amounts of suspended solids in the water column. In addition to the natural resource benefits, riparian landowners will be educated as to how to be better stewards of their property.

Heather L. Enterline

Survey of Tannery Creek

Biologist Wells conducted elevation surveys within Tannery Creek on June 28. Assistance with surveying was provided by the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council. The surveys are needed to complete the design of a sea lamprey barrier that will be installed on the creek prior to a low head dam removal upstream and for securing a permit from Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. The dam is located in Petosky Michigan two miles upstream from Lake Michigan. Discussions between the Service (Alpena FRO and Marquette Biological Station) and the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council have determined that it is likely the barrier can be temporary for three months out of the year. It is needed to prevent the possibility of lamprey moving into the system once the dam is removed. This is a collaborative effort between the Alpena Fisheries Resources Office, Sea Lamprey Control, the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, and the East Lansing

Ecological Services Office. This project will enhance aquatic habitat and will benefit fish and wildlife resources. It will assists with restoring fish passage for book trout into reaches of Tannery Creek in Petosky Michigan.

Susan E. Wells

Pine River Watershed Fish Passage Tour

On June 17, Biologists Wells and Enterline were given a tour of the Pine River and Van Etten Lake Watershed. The watershed extends into Iosco and Alcona counties in northeast Lower Michigan. Rick Myrick from Huron Pines RC&D conducted the tour using a recently compiled road crossing inventory. The purpose of the day long event was to identify potential fish passage projects. A total of 17 road crossing sites were visited. Upon completion of the tour, discussion was held to determine what sites were best suited for the fish passage program. It was determined that five of the sites would constitute a fish passage obstacle for brook trout and northern pike. If the five projects were to be completed by the fish passage program, approximately 20 miles of inland streams would be opened to fish. This is an example of collaboration between government and local watershed groups to enhance aquatic habitat which will benefit fish and wildlife resources. This project provides assistance for enhancing fish passage for book trout and northern pike into reaches of the Pine River and Van Etten Lake Watershed.

Susan E. Wells

Tannery Creek Fish Passage Project

On June 18 Project Leader McClain and Biologist Wells met with Wil Cwikeil of the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council and Greg Klingler from the Marquette Biological Station for an inspection of a Fish Passage project site on Tannery Creek. The project calls for the removal of a small dam on Tannery Creek which will allow free movement of resident brook trout on this Lake Michigan tributary. Due to the proximity of the site to the mouth of the creek, there was a need to determine what, if any, measures were needed to prevent sea lamprey from migrating up the system. Although there are other impediments to fish passage below the proposed dam removal site and no record of sea lamprey in the system, it was determined that the conservative approach would be to incorporate a lamprey barrier into one of the downstream structures. Design and installation of a sea lamprey barrier will be completed before the dam is removed. Biologist Wells, with assistance from Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council staff, is scheduled to conduct survey work at the site in late June to assist with the design of the sea lamprey barrier. Funds from the

Service's Fish Passage and Coastal Grant Program are being pooled with matching funds to complete both phases of the project. Removal of the barrier will benefit native brook trout, listed by the Service as a Fish and Wildlife Resource Conservation Priority, by allowing free access to most of the spawning, feeding and resting habitat provided by this small Lake Michigan tributary.

Jerry R. McClain

Cooperation with Native Americans

Alpena FRO Conducts Independent Lake Whitefish Survey in Lake Huron

From May 28 to June 25 staff from the Alpena Fisheries Resource Office (FRO) conducted a fishery independent lake whitefish survey in 1836 Treaty waters of northern Lake Huron. Staff involved included treaty unit coordinator Aaron Woldt, biologist Adam Kowalski, biologist Scott Koproski, assistant project leader Tracy Hill, and project leader Jerry McClain. The goal of this survey was to collect fishery independent abundance and biological data of lake whitefish stocks in treaty waters for use in statistical-catch-at-age (SCAA) population models that are updated annually to determine harvest regulation guidelines (HRG's) for tribal commercial fishers in 1836 Treaty waters. As dictated in the 2000 Consent Decree—a 20 year fishery allocation agreement for 1836 Treaty waters signed by the State of Michigan, United States, BMIC, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, and Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians—the Modeling Subcommittee (MSC) of the Technical Fisheries Committee (TFC) annually collects data and conducts model runs to determine lake whitefish HRG's for 5 management units in northern Lake Huron. This survey fulfills the data need identified by the MSC.

Using the Alpena FRO 30' research vessel and staff, 24 overnight, variable mesh gill net sets were conducted at randomly selected sites in lake whitefish management unit 4 (Alpena to Presque Isle) and lake whitefish management unit 5 (Presque Isle to Hammond Bay). All lake whitefish collected were measured for length, weighed, checked for lamprey wounds, sexed, and assessed for maturity and visceral fat content. Non-target fish species were worked up in a similar manner as well. We took scale, fin ray, and otolith samples from each lake whitefish for age determination and removed stomachs whole. The stomach contents will be identified and counted by staff at the Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab in Muskegon, MI. This survey will continue annually and will be tailored to meet the needs identified by the MSC. All data from this survey will be compiled, maintained, and analyzed at the Alpena FRO. Data collected in this survey will improve the accuracy of current population models being used to set lake whitefish harvest guidelines in 1836 Treaty waters of northern Lake Huron. Good model output is essential to sound and sustainable management of the lake whitefish resource in northern Lake Huron, and lake whitefish is the central component to the Native American commercial fisheries in 1836 Treaty waters. Harvest limits allow lake whitefish fisheries

to be executed while still protecting the biological integrity of lake whitefish stocks. This outcome is consistent with the Service's goal of maintaining self-sustaining populations of native fish species while meeting the needs of tribal communities.

Aaron P. Woldt

Partnerships and Accountability

Shipwreck Inventory

On June 28, Biologists Adam Kowalski and Scott Koproski assisted National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with an inventory of the shipwreck Nordmere. The Nordmere was a German ocean going vessel that went aground in Lake Huron in 1972. The inventory of the Nordmere was part of a very large inventory of shipwrecks within the newly established Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve. The Sanctuary was established in 2001 to ensure the protection of shipwrecks within it boundaries. Kowalski and Koproski assisted by transporting gear and personnel on the Alpena FRO research vessel from the harbor to the wreck. NOAA took five personnel and their equipment to the wreck to take pictures and gather information about the location and distribution of the wreck on the lake bottom. NOAA also agreed to let us set an experimental gillnet that sits three feet off the bottom and take pictures of the net for us. Pictures were needed to determine if the net was sitting correctly in the water and fishing properly. Participation in this task allowed the Alpena FRO to form a partnership with another federal agency for completion of a project that will help educate the public about some of the recreational opportunities within the Great Lakes. Filming of the gillnet allowed us to determine first hand that the experimental gillnet is fishing properly and should help avoid non-target species during future lake whitefish surveys.

Adam T. Kowalski

Omni Max Documentary About Lake Sturgeon and the Great Lakes

Fishery Biologist James Boase initiated a meeting with members from USGS Great lakes Science Center, DTE Energy, North Star Films, and Purdy Fisheries on June 18, 2003. The purpose of the meeting was to bring interested members together to discuss an Omni Max production about the Great Lakes that would include segments about lake sturgeon and commercial fishing. Producer David Lickly from North Star Productions has been gathering information about the Great Lakes for almost two years with the hope of producing a documentary by 2006. He was particularly interested in the construction of an artificial spawning reef in the Detroit River and wanted "to see these magnificent fish." Boase arranged to have boats available in Point Edward, Ontario so that members of the party could see lake sturgeon up close. Members from DTE Energy were invited because of their involvement with funding of lake sturgeon research over the last six years and large corporate sponsors are needed for the production of the film. Two boats were used; one occupied by Boase, biologists Bruce Manny from USGS Great Lakes Science Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan and Bob Ryder from DTE Energy. The other boat was provided by Purdy Fisheries and included Tim Purdy, producer David Lickly from

North Star Productions, Toronto, Ontario, Roberta Urbani and a photograper from DTE Energy. Baited setlines were used to demonstrate the capture of lake sturgeon on June 18th with four fish being captured. Production of this type of documentary film that includes a segment about lake sturgeon could result in a major increase in public awareness and is a vital component in our rehabilitation efforts. This event provided a unique opportunity to bring parties with diverse interest together to explain the Service's mission and efforts to restore native fish in the Great Lakes. Specifically, the Service's efforts to rehabilitate lake sturgeon in the Great Lakes. Benefits of native species restoration was clearly defined and explained. The event provided an excellent opportunity to form new partnerships with DTE Energy, North Star Productions, and Purdy Fishery's.

James C. Boase

Public Use

Alpena 4Th Annual Lafarge Riverfest

Assistant Project Leader Tracy Hill, and Fishery Biologists Susan Wells and Anjanette Bowen along with MDNR Boat Captain Jeff Dymond participated in the 4th Annual LaFarge Riverfest on 7 June. The festival is an annual family event held in the city of Alpena. The Alpena FRO collected samples of native (smallmouth bass, walleye and northern pike) and invasive fish species (round goby, ruffe and zebra mussels) from the Thunder Bay River for display at the festival. Personnel from the USGS Hammond Bay Biological Station provided sea lamprey for the display. Riverfest participants received information about Lake Huron fisheries and fisheries management by visiting the booth. Approximately 2,000 people visited the booth. This citywide festival allowed the Alpena FRO the opportunity to fulfill one of the station goals of distributing information to the general public about fish and wildlife resources, natural ecosystems and programs of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Tracy D. Hill

Alpena Youth Learn About Fish and Fishing

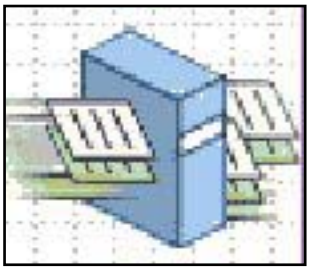
Children (ages 7-9) from the Alpena Youth Center in Alpena, Michigan learned about fish, fishing, and water safety on June 26, 2003 at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Fishery Resources Office in Alpena, Michigan. Fresh fish were on display and children were taught general characteristics about fish and how to identify various Great Lakes fish. The harm of aquatic nuisance species was also discussed, as was the importance of proper safety and personal protective gear when fishing or playing near water. The Service works to educate the public about fishery resources to

encourage public use. Children are the public stewards of tomorrow's natural resources and it is important to teach them about the resources that exist.

Anjanette K. Bowen

Leadership in Science and Technology

Alpena FRO Hardware/Software Upgrades



During the month of June, Administrative Technician, Debra Turner, completed the installation of the MS Office XP Suite on all computers and also upgraded the Alpena FRO to a new fileserver. As one of the selected test sites for the MS Office XP upgrade, Debra installed this on each computer after the Computer Support Group remotely installed the MS software to the field office network fileserver. Also the Alpena FRO Windows NT fileserver was replaced with a Windows 2000 fileserver. This upgrade to standardize the Service with MS Office will improve efficiency in communications both internally and externally. Standardizing the field office makes it more productive in communicating and comparing information and allows for a more trouble free management of office computers. The server upgrade improves security, reliability, and availability. File sharing is improved and allows users to gather information more quickly across the network.

Debra L. Turner

Workforce Management

Alpena FRO Provides career Training Opportunity for Local High School Students

The Alpena FRO is assisting the local high school with a career development program for local youth. On June 25, Project Leader Jerry McClain met with Joe Klemens who coordinates the Upward Bound Program for Alpena High School. The Upward Bound Program provides students with the opportunity to work with area professionals in a field they are interested in pursuing as a career. Two students, Jason Black and Brandon Smith, have been assigned to the Alpena FRO. Biologists Scott Koproski and Adam Kowalski have been working with the students since they started the program. The students are provided 10 hours a week and Biologists Koproski and Kowalski have been exposing them to some of the daily operations of the Alpena FRO. Both students have expressed an interest in pursuing a career in the natural resources profession. Hopefully the work experience they gain at the Alpena FRO will serve as a foundation for their career in the natural resources profession. Staff at the Alpena FRO are exposing the Upward Bound students to a profession dealing with Great Lakes fish species and fishery research. The opportunities provided to the students will hopefully prepare them for future employment in the fishery or aquatic resource profession. Skills they will obtain will assist them during future employment.

Scott R. Koproski

Accomplishment Archive